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January 8, 2002

Attorney General John Ashcroft
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20530-0001

Dear Mr. Ashcroft:

Even though the effects of this Microsoft lawsuit would not have had any immediate effect upon my company, eventually public confidence in the entire computer industry could have eroded to the point where most software developers would have been distracted from their core business of new software development and forced to concentrate on marketing and sales concerns.

As such, the settlement is an important decision. I ask you to continue to support it through the comment period, and preserve the spirit of free enterprise and the pragmatism of consumer confidence. The settlement clarifies what constitutes unfair behavior in the marketplace, and Microsoft has agreed to end its retaliatory actions toward software companies that write programs that compete with Microsoft's, and toward hardware companies that load non-Microsoft software onto their computers before shipping.

The IT industry has led our national economy through one of the longest running periods of economic expansion in our country. I am looking forward to the settlement as a signal that once again, our economy can recover with the IT industry leading the way. I support this settlement, and I hope that no further federal action will be contemplated against Microsoft.

Sincerely,

Timothy N. Blaede
Vice President, Information Services

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